

Facts About Ovarian Cancer

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What You Should Know

- Ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer in women (not counting skin cancer) and ranks fifth as the cause of cancer death in women.¹
- Ovarian cancer has a high death rate because nearly 70% of cases are diagnosed after the cancer has spread beyond the ovary.
- Currently, there is no effective screening test for ovarian cancer.
- A woman's risk of getting ovarian cancer during her lifetime is about 1 in 67.¹
- The sign and symptoms of ovarian cancer include bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, and urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency). If these symptoms are experienced almost daily and with increasing severity for more than a few weeks, a thorough examination should be preformed by a doctor or gynecologist.

Risk Factors

- Factors that **increase** a woman's risk for developing ovarian cancer include family history of ovarian or breast cancer, personal history of breast cancer, infertility or not having children until late in life, being overweight, early menarche (before age 12) or late menopause (after age 50), use of talcum powder on the genital area, older age, being of Ashkanazi Jewish descent, and smoking and alcohol use.¹
- Women who have inherited certain altered (mutated) genes have a much higher risk of developing ovarian cancer. These mutations may be found on the BRCA1, BRCA2, or hereditary nonpolyposis colon cancer (HNPCC) genes. Although

women with a BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation are at higher risk for ovarian cancer, only 10% of women with ovarian cancer have one of these mutations.¹

- Factors that **reduce** a woman's risk for developing ovarian cancer include birth control pills, having multiple children and breast-feeding, having a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) or tubal ligation (female sterilization), and having both ovaries removed.¹

Incidence and Mortality

- During 2004, 727 women in Michigan were newly diagnosed with ovarian cancer.²
- In 2005, 538 women in Michigan died of the disease.³
- The incidence of ovarian cancer in Michigan has declined from 17.0 per 100,000 women in 1990 to 12.8 per 100,000 women in 2004.² These rates are similar to the national rates.⁴
- Mortality rates associated with ovarian cancer have slightly decreased in Michigan from 9.9 deaths per 100,000 women in 1991 to 9.2 deaths per 100,000 women in 2005.³ These rates are similar to the national rates.⁴
- Michigan's ovarian cancer mortality rate ranks 21st in the nation, with 30 states having lower mortality rates.⁴

References:

1. American Cancer Society
2. MDCH Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, 1985-2004 Michigan Cancer Incidence File
3. MDCH Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, 1985-2005 Michigan Resident Death Files
4. SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2004 National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD